The Supper of the Prophet, Priest and King

Let us turn to our Bibles to Matthew chapter 26. Matthew 26. Matthew 26, 26-29.

Here we have the Lord's Supper as given to us by Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer. Matthew 26, 26 and following, let us listen attentively to the word of God. And as they were eating Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body.

Then he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins. I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. Let us pray.

Here in God we go over a familiar passage and we see it with new lights as we understand the operations of your Son as our mediator, the God-man, as prophet, priest, and king here in these words. So we can see and understand how all three are being used and the functions are there to encourage us, God, that you are a whole Christ, a prophet, priest, and a king and exercising these things for us and here in particular through communion or the Eucharist, the celebration of your death for us. May it therefore encourage and strengthen us and draw us nigh unto you, we pray.

Amen. How does the supper relate to the person and work of Christ? We know it does because Jesus says it's about me, but in what way specifically does it? Back in the late 80s, and I'm sure it's still a problem today as I've run across various and sundry ways, they had debates in evangelical circles. Should unbelievers be called to believe in Christ as only their priest, as only the one who saved them, but also perhaps also as their Lord or one or the other? So it was called a Lordship debate at the time in which they were arguing, hey, Jesus saves you as a priest, but you don't have to obey and submit to him as a Lord.

You hear that and you're like, what? Now, I think it's expressed differently today, but you still see it unfortunately in circles and churches that they present a gospel of Jesus as he's come to take away your sins, that's all you need to know. And you're happy about it, I've met people like that unfortunately. Yes, I went to church, I heard these things, and you're not going to church anymore.

Well, no, because I have Jesus in my heart. But do you have Jesus in your mind? Are you acting and following his will? And so from that perspective, I hope we can see here in this passage that Matthew 26, when we look at it carefully, we see Christ exercising all three offices, not just the priesthood. Of course, the priestly part, the sacrificing of himself, the offering of himself is very much front and center, clearly here.

I mean, someone's dying, he's going to die, his body and his blood is shed and broken for us. But other things are going on here as well, if we but pay attention. And so here, I wish to unpack these things for us for our better edification.

Christ here is the prophet of the supper. The text, Christ sitting with the disciples. And what do we have here? Well, it's a Passover, but it stops and becomes and pivots over to the

Lord's Supper or communion, the capital C right to be one to be brought together or fellowship with our Lord and Redeemer, and sometimes known as the Eucharist.

You hear that you perhaps think Roman Catholic, it just means celebration, rejoicing with God in Christ Jesus for living and dying for us. Specifically, it's a sacrament here that Christ has given us is back then is still for today. Of course, it's a sacrament.

What is a sacrament? Again, maybe you grew up thinking Roman Catholic, or perhaps Lutheran. Neither. It's a specific word.

That means a sign and seal of the covenant of grace. That's it. Nothing fancier than that.

It has no Roman Catholic overtones in our circles and Protestant circles at all. Although it may be the same kind of word outwardly, but it means something different, a sign and a seal of the covenant of grace. What is a sign? We all know what a sign is other than simply what you see down the road driving.

It means more broadly, the symbolism, it points to something beyond itself, an outward symbol pointing to a spiritual reality of what Jesus has done, a historical reality 2000 years ago, and but even today, because as we'll go over here in this passage, we'll see that the Lord's Supper communion helps us grow as believers. It is working in us by faith, by the power of the Spirit, so that we become more like Jesus. So it's a sign, it points to, right? The blood isn't really here, it points to, that is the wine points to the blood.

The bread, the matzo bread points to the body of Christ. It is not the body itself. It is a sign, a symbol, a pointing away from, and also it is a seal.

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, a sign, a seal of the covenant of grace, a certification or authentication for the conscience to assuage and help strengthen our soul before God in Christ. The sign is understood by the preaching of the word. If you had no instruction in Christianity, what would this mean to you? Even our society today, as much as it's fallen away from its Christian heritage, people have an understanding of something going on here with this body and blood language here of the Lord's Supper.

But if we were pagans, and this was all new to us, like it was 2,000 years ago, and they come walking in and they see these activities, if we didn't use the word of God to explain what's going on here, you may think, like a pagan, because that's what the pagans taught, this was literally blood and literally a body, and we're eating and drinking it. So they accused the early Christians and the early church, the 100s and 200s, of cannibalism. One more lie against what we taught and believed.

So the preaching is therefore important. It is not the act itself. This is a supplement or an addition to the preaching of the word in worship.

It does not replace it. Now the sealing here is by the work of the Holy Spirit. We have that in that passage in Ephesians 1, that I'm still preaching through, Ephesians 1, verse 13, "...and him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and

whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." There's that word, sealing, to press down upon your conscience that you are His and He is yours.

The Spirit is involved in the sealing, which is involved in having believed. In the process of believing, you are being sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. And so the Spirit, therefore, is here involved in the Lord's Supper.

But how? What's the exact relationship here? Part of the answer is already there in Ephesians 1, verse 13. The sealing is not automatic. This is not a mechanical function, as is taught in the Roman Catholic Church, where you're supposed to have this thing called implicit faith.

Just do it, trust us, and something good will happen if you take the baptism, if you take the Lord's Supper, and you take their six, five other sacraments, they have seven sacraments total, just made up out of their own heads. You feed upon Christ when you come to the table with the mouth of faith. That's the metaphor.

That's what Jesus is shooting for here in this description. It is your faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is your reckoning yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.

It is your public confession as well that Christ died for you, that you embrace this truth. The bread and wine, therefore, represent the body and blood of Christ. We know that in the symbolism.

But in conjunction with faith is when you have the sealing effect. And so there, in the passage, Ephesians 1, verse 13, and whom also having, what, believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It's the believing and the sealing that go hand in hand in your growth, in you maturing by taking the Lord's Supper.

But also, again, I'll remind us, in hearing the word of God, because Ephesians 1, verse 13, is in him you also trust in, you have trust in Jesus, there's an object to our faith, what, after you heard the word of truth. Preaching of the word is important. Hearing of the word is important.

That's how you grow your faith. So in giving the Lord's Supper, as an addendum, as it were, to the preaching of the word, but this is how it is functioning. You believe.

That's how the sealing is effected upon us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The two go hand in hand. Spirit and our believing, our faith.

Right here and right now, the effect upon us is not by physically eating the body of Christ, that's cannibalism. They're correct, if that's what we believe, but we don't. Rather, it represents what our soul is supposed to be doing, resting and trusting in God and Christ, that he is more precious to us than food and water and wine, with respect to our soul.

We need him, like our body needs food and our body needs water and wine. They actually, we know historically, mixed water with the wine back then. By trusting in Jesus and trusting in his words.

But isn't communion with the Eucharist enacted through Christ's office as a priest? Of course, he's acting as a priest here. He's gonna die for his people. He represents them as the great high priest of the Old Testament, as expounded, of course, in the book of Hebrews. But his other offices are operating as well, both a prophet and as a king.

Christ the Prophet of the Supper

And here in the first point, prophet, prophet, after I explain what the Lord's Supper is, it's expressed and it's taught to the people of God as Jesus the prophet. Now what does a prophet do? A prophet does two things.

He foretells, right, the future. Talk about future. He foretells the future, what's gonna happen, prophecy and the like.

And he foretells, or he tells forth the word of God. That's the instruction part that we're used to when the prophet's telling them, stop lying, stop committing adultery. That's the foretelling function of the prophets of old.

Christ does both here, in fact, because he promises in verse 29. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. He's telling him what's gonna happen in the future.

That's a prophetic office. It's good news because he's coming back and we will celebrate with him when he returns. Meanwhile, we have the Lord's Supper, we have communion here, the wine and the bread to remind us of what he has done in the past and also what he continues to do now, that's why we're taking it now, and also as a sign and seal of the future promise that he will come back.

When we take this, we are confessing that we believe and trust in that fact. He speaks of the future of his return. But also in speaking and talking to them, he's explaining what? He's explaining God's truth to them.

So he's also foretelling, again, the function of a prophet. Jesus is walking among his people back then for three years and what does he do? He speaks, he preaches, he exhorts, he warns, he admonishes. That's the work of foretelling or the work of a prophet.

He gives them the mind of God and unpacks the word therein for them and, of course, for us. That's the work of a prophet. So when we understand these offices, you can go to these texts and go, oh, now I understand what Christ is doing here, even though the word isn't used there but it's the function being used here, of course.

We do this all the time when we talk to one another. You didn't use the word, I know, but I know exactly what you had in mind because of the way you talked about it. And so Christ here is applying God's command of the Lord's Supper, explaining how it relates to his work as a priest in his body and his blood for his people here and, of course, into the future when he returns.

And he's our prophet as well, not just in the Lord's Supper, brothers and sisters. It's not just here in this text at that time or in this event of commemorating the work of Christ of the past, the sacrament. He gives us guidance through his word.

He speaks through the Bible, his will for our lives, what is important for us to believe, of the church, of following him, of submitting to him, of loving and loving one another, the sweet fellowship that we have, the Ten Commandments, the fruit of the Spirit, all this is through his guidance as our prophet in instructing and giving us the tools to learn and grow as believers because he gives us the spirit. And conviction through the word, of course, wherein he calls us to repent, to carry the yoke of Christ, to die to the old ways and to live to the new. These are the functions of our Lord and Savior as our prophet, not just back then but even today through the word of God.

As we read it, memorize it, and learn from it, he is exercising that office for us. And that's a good thing because he loves us and he wants us to be instructed to become more like him and not live in ignorance. He is a prophet for the Lord's Supper, a means by which he teaches us to die and to live.

Thus, we believe as we have in 1 Corinthians 11 of the clear warning not to come haphazardly to the Lord's Supper unless there is some kind of punishment upon them. And so we believe in preparing ourselves beforehand, that we examine ourselves, are we in outright rebellion before God? We don't always know that. Remind us again.

The long list we have in the larger catechism, both before, during, and after, is to cover all possibilities of what's going on in that little head of yours, I don't know what's going on. That's all it is. It's not saying you all have these problems.

Everything here listed here. But that it could be because we have a mixed multitude often in churches. So they offer, as it were, in my mind, like a grape shot, a shotgun.

Boom, here's all these different ways to examine yourself with respect to what you do or don't do in your life, both internally and externally, and of course throughout the week when I'm not with you watching you. That's all it is. And if you're not in outward rebellion before God, you shouldn't be fearful of coming before him in the Lord's Supper.

They were, in 1 Corinthians 11, remember the context. They were fighting one another and debating in the churches of Corinth. It was a public scandal.

And even the poor were cast aside to the side and had to eat on their own and the like. It's just terrible. If that was going on here, we would certainly start doing things as a leadership.

By God's grace, you have been very much a blessing to us. So, this is how Christ, as our prophet, uses the Lord's Supper. So we examine ourselves before, during, and afterwards.

One of the larger categories of questions goes over that. Do we see that we're encouraged and strengthened by taking the Lord's Supper? Did it help us therein to reevaluate our lives

or something along those lines? There are all different ways you can look at it. And if not, pray to God for more help therein so that next time it will help you.

Christ the Priest of the Supper

Secondly, Christ is the Priest of the Supper. That's kind of obvious. There's only a lot of confusion about that and not a lot of debate about this.

As his mission draws near, he's going to die and die for his people. The Lord's Supper highlights Christ, of course, as an offering for sin and breaking of his body, like the sacrifices of old that were broken up by the work of the priest, literally cutting up the animal and the shedding of blood was there for almost every sacrifice. There was the shedding of blood, as Hebrew reminds us as well.

What does the priest do? He offers himself for us. Hebrews 10, 12, but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. Romans 5, 10, 4, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received the reconciliation. In other words, he is a surety or a guarantee of the covenant of grace for us, brothers and sisters. And so he died as the second Adam, as our representative, and he offered his body.

And in doing so, he also continues to make intercession for us. He is the mediator, right? He's the go-between is kind of the way we talk about it in modern day lingo. Of course, it's much more serious than that, much more amazing that he is both God and man.

And as man, he represents us, he sees us, and he knows who we are and our frailties. And as God, he can assuage the guilt, the infinite guilt, for that's what it is when we break his and transgress his holy will and law and thought, word, and deed, which certainly we have. It's an infinite holy God with infinite holy glory.

Romans 8.34 tells us there's continual intercession for us. He is there as our mediator, always here and now. He doesn't stop that function in his work.

Romans 8.34, who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us, right then and there, not just the past, brothers and sisters. You can go to Jesus right here, even at this moment right now, and ask for forgiveness for that sin you're making excuses for. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Clear rhetorical questions which are none of it can, none of it shall, and it cannot because of his intercession for you here and now.

That he is for us and thus God is no longer our judge but our father. He is in heaven now. He's no longer on the cross.

This is one reason why it's so offensive to us when people wear crucifixes, right, a cross with Christ on it. What are you doing? He's not there anymore. He's in heaven interceding for us.

He's a priest, not only of course there in giving of the Lord's Supper as a sign of his death for them and here and now as well interceding for us, but also in everyday life. You can come to our Lord and Savior with your sins, not just on Sunday as though it's the only day that you're supposed to be holy, but we're called to be holy throughout the week as well, brothers and sisters, and that means we're going to fall short of sin because of sin, and so we should ask for forgiveness, ask for mercy whenever and wherever we are. For there is forgiveness with our Father through Jesus Christ.

You can reject therefore the lies of the devil who would have you doubt of Christ's power to forgive as though you are not good enough for him to listen to you or good enough to have the Lord's Supper. We have that language, as you recall, and I'll be reading it when I go over the Lord's Supper, in which it reminds us that we should examine ourselves to be sure, but not think that we have to be perfect somehow to come to the Lord's Supper, but that we, in our recognition of our humility of our sins and our need of a Savior, that is why we come to the Lord's Supper. We recognize where we are and what we need.

And, as I've mentioned already, he's a priest here for the Lord's Supper. He is the prophet. He uses the Lord's Supper to instruct us and show us this is what it means that he loved us so much that he gave his only begotten Son.

He loves us. He died for us and continues to intercede for us, but as a priest, he is with us always with his grace and strength day by day in his intercession. Not that he's here in body, but that he is, of course, here in spirit, for he is with us always as God.

Christ the King of the Supper

And lastly, thirdly, Christ, the King of the Supper. What does it mean that Christ is the King of the Supper? Now, this is a little less obvious. I can point to verse 29, of course, but I say to you, I will not drink until I return with my Father's kingdom, therefore, exercise of his prophetic office, that he is speaking and instructing and explaining things to them, evidence of his prophetic office.

What do I find evidence of his kingly office here? That's a fair question. The kingly function is implied in the very initiation and act of communion, of the Lord's Supper. Hang on to that thought.

The very act itself was a kingly act, is what I'm saying. First of all, what do kings do? They rule and subdue us. I'm using the language of the Shorter Catechism.

It's not a popular democracy. The church is not a popular democracy, as much as we like to think otherwise in America. But it's there for our good, for our souls, for we are certainly stubborn, and we need to be conquered.

The language that he rules and subdues us, because we will fight back with our sinful inclinations. We know it. We see it.

That's part of what it means to be living in this world. We're not in heaven yet. And if you are humbled, you're going to recognize, I need someone stronger than my stubbornness towards sin to conquer me.

And that's Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is most needful for our soul that he be king and give us, of course, a kingdom that we are part of. And he is the Lord.

And we are but what? Unprofitable servants, as you read in Luke 17, only doing what we should in that parable. Yet he defends us as well. It's not simply in this crass way that, you know, the flesh is inclined towards.

I don't want a king. I don't need a ruler over me. You think you are better than I am? Well, actually, he is, yes.

In fact, he is better than us. That's the point. He defends us nevertheless.

It's promised here, if we read carefully, that God preserves and defends us. As a king is supposed to defend and preserve his people. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

How can he make that promise unless he has the power to as a king to preserve you until that great day? That's the point. There's an implied promise here in verse 29 that you will be with him. And we will have that last great marriage feast of the lamb together.

The Father's kingdom is a kingdom of rule as well. We read here, I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. There's a kingdom.

There's a king. Who's the king? Jesus, the God-man. And so he will subdue his enemies.

He will subdue us fully and thoroughly so that sin is squashed out of us and his return will come. We will have the kingdom of glory and all this will fade away, these struggles of sin and sorrow and difficulty. His sovereign might as Lord is implied in this text.

But behind this, as I said before, to hang on to that thought, where did the Lord's Supper come from? I don't see it in the Mosaic Code. What I see there is Passover. I see all the sacrifices.

I see all the holy days. Where is this communion or Lord's Supper coming from? Well, you say, Jesus gave it to us. Isn't that good enough? Yes.

Amen. What specifically is he exercising to give us this new sacrament? This is what it is. It's a new sacrament, a new way of worshiping and honoring God.

Do you have the authority to come along and tell me and the rest of the church, you really want to honor God, this is what you do. Wash your hands with special holy water, blessed by the priest. No.

Churches do that unfortunately. They come up with these new ways of doing things that makes them feel good and holy. You don't have the authority to do that.

Any more than you have the authority with respect to your parents that you love, I hope you love them, or your spouse. I want to honor you in any way I feel like honoring you. You honor them the way they want to be honored, don't you? Of course you do.

You think about what do you want? That's what it is here. But more importantly, Christ is exercising as a king, saying, I'm the king. A king does what? He has a kingdom.

He rules over it. How does he rule? Through his will, through his law. And what law does he have? Two-fold, right? Natural law, positive law.

What's positive law? Built merely upon his will. It's not caked into creation. He could have picked something else than the Lord's Supper.

In fact, he did. He had all these other things before the Lord's Supper. And the Lord's Supper is going to disappear in heaven as well.

No more baptism. We're based merely upon his will. That's positive law.

That's what this is. Jesus comes along and says, I'm making a new thing. Where'd that come from? Because I am king.

Now he hid that glory, as it were. They didn't fully understand. You're king? What? Of course he's king.

A thousand times. And only he can, therefore, make such a command for us of how to honor him and to be blessed by him. This is his way for us to be blessed.

Don't forget that. Psalm 2.6, Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree.

The Lord has said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I'll give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possessions.

And you shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Who is this but King Jesus, the God-man? And it's a comfort to know that he is in charge and he is our King and Lord, and he is functioning and exercising that function as a king in giving us the Lord's Supper, preserving us so that we are here today so we can participate in this.

Why? So that we can grow as believers and grow closer to him. He is here as a king for the Lord's Supper, not just then, but even here and now. When he is accompanied by the preaching of his word, he uses the word of God to subdue you.

Both the preaching and, of course, the reading of it, therein, to kill the old man, examining yourself before, during, and after, desiring to be further conquered by the work of Jesus Christ as our King. Your salvation, as pictured in the Lord's Supper, brothers and sisters, is the work of one man who is your prophet, your priest, and your King. Let us pray.

Our Lord and Savior, God above, you who are our prophet, priest, and King, we come and cling to you, we pray, and all your offices and works for us, all summed up as the mediator, the great Redeemer, rejoicing that we can be here, that you've given us such a new sacrament that reflects a greater glory of the New Testament age, where we don't have to worry about understanding you more and more, insofar as you're so far away, as it were, as in the Old Testament. You had not come to earth yet, but now you have. So this is a reflection of that great change in history.

And may such a reflection, Lord, be upon our hearts, that it would comfort us, strengthen us, and draw us nigh unto you, we pray, by the blood of our Lord and Savior, who is our prophet and our priest and our King. Amen.